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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4868
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0348
RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA PRIORITY 3450
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHBS/DEA BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY
RUEHNA/DEA HQS WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNFB/FBI WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 000611

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR L/LEI BELLINGER, S/CT DAILEY AND EUR/WE
NSC FOR JUAN ZARATE
DEA FOR PAUL CRAINE, MICHAEL BRAUN AND THOMAS HARRIGAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/29/2018

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN/AL-KASSAR EXTRADITION: LEGAL CASE IS CLOSED,
POLITICAL DECISION REMAINS

REF: A. MADRID 312

[1](#)B. MADRID 007

Classified By: Ambassador Eduardo Aguirre, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d)

[1](#)1. (C) Spanish Deputy Justice Minister Julio Perez-Hernandez phoned the DCM on May 29 to confirm that Syrian arms dealer Monzer Al-Kassar had exhausted all of his legal appeals, and, as a legal matter, the case was closed. Perez-Hernandez said that he had the file sitting on his desk, and that he could send it to the Council of Ministers for final approval as soon as he received the go-ahead. He hinted to the DCM that the final decision now lay with President Zapatero's office in Moncloa (the location of Spain's National Security Council).

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador followed up later in the day with a phone call to Bernardino Leon, Zapatero's new Secretary General of the Presidency (and former Deputy Foreign Minister). The Ambassador referenced the DCM's conversation with Perez-Hernandez, indicating that Al-Kassar's legal appeals process had terminated, and asked for the status of our extradition request. Leon said that he had been aware of the case during his time at the Foreign Ministry, but admitted that he was not up to speed on the latest. The Ambassador told Leon that we were aware through various sources that the Zapatero government was coming under pressure from a third country to halt the extradition. Leon promised to look into the case and follow up directly with the Ambassador.

//COMMENT//

[1](#)3. (C) The extradition of this notorious arms dealer with major links to terrorist groups and terrorist attacks has moved from the legal to the political arena, and is now in the hands of President Zapatero and his Cabinet. The Embassy Country Team, from the Ambassador on down, has intensely worked this case since Al-Kassar's arrest by Spanish authorities almost one year ago. Bernardino Leon has always been an effective interlocutor, but should he prove unable to deliver, the Embassy may seek support from the highest levels in Washington.
Aguirre